



Minutes
Committee #2
Labor Negotiations, Personnel, Policy and Administration
and
Committee #3
Transportation, Construction, Public Safety and Traffic
January 7, 2014

Committee #2 - Labor Negotiations, Personnel, Policy and Administration and Committee #3 Transportation, Construction, Public Safety and Traffic met on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 10:30 AM in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 30 West Central Street, Chippewa Falls, WI.

Council/Committee Members present: Bill Hicks, Amy Mason, Chuck Hull, Jane Lardahl, Mike Hanke, George Adrian, and Mayor Hoffman.

Others present: Finance Manager/Treasurer Lynne Bauer, Director of Public Works/City Engineer/Utilities Manager Rick Rubenzer, Assistant City Engineer Matt Decur, Street Superintendent Rick Ruf, Water Supervisor Rory Olson, Senior Engineering Technician Todd Berg, and City Clerk Bridget Givens.

Call to Order: 10:30 am

Items of business to be discussed or acted upon at this meeting are shown on the attached agenda below:

1. Discuss/consider City of Chippewa Falls Snow Removal Policy. Possible recommendations to the Council.

Councilor Hicks advised he would like to take the decision for determining when to plow out of the hands of the Street Department, and adhere to plowing if snow accumulations total two to three inches or more. He would also like to remove the paragraph from the snow removal policy which indicates the Public Works Department relies heavily on the observations of the Police Department and various other resources to alert them to road conditions. Councilor Hanke concurred that clear, concise guidance of when to plow or not is needed.

Public Works Director Rubenzer apprised the committee as to how communication is handled with the Police Department regarding road conditions, indicating the process has been working well to this point. Hanke questioned why we need to enforce the overnight parking restrictions. Councilor Adrian, as a previous Street Department employee, shared that when the plow operators are out, they are prioritizing areas based upon additional factors such as day of the week or known events planned in the City. When cars are parked on the streets during the restricted timeframes, it causes issues of frozen ice and snow which is hard on the equipment when the subsequent plow is done. Adrian would not be favor of removing the overnight parking restriction. Street Superintendent Ruf stated that typically priority #1 and priority #2 streets are combined when plowing is done. When the crews are out at 1:00 am, they are performing an economical plow in the residential areas.

Rubenzer shared we have not changed the way we remove snow in the City for quite some time. We have however, had high moisture snowfalls followed by extremely low temperatures which have made the conditions difficult. Mayor Hoffman thought the issue seems to occur when the temperature rises and the snow/ice on the roads becomes soft and slushy and then freezes again. This type of condition typically happens in the spring as opposed to December and gives citizens the perception the streets are not being plowed. Graders are really the only equipment that can remove the slush (bearing in mind we don't want to take it down to the asphalt). Plows are not effective in this capacity. The graders have been dispatched to clean up the residential streets; however, December 2013 resulted in roughly 20" of snowfall with the average being 10".

Councilor Hull opined the weather determines more than the policy does with Rubenzer concurring the type of snowfall dictates the conditions of the streets. This year the freezes were very deep following the wet snow. The committee was reminded if they receive calls from concerned citizens, they can direct those individuals to the appropriate department head for additional information.

Lardahl also feels rather than leave the determination to the on-call person, that any time there is two to three inches of snow, particularly wet snow, it makes sense to plow. It would help the overall condition of the streets.

Some committee members expressed concern that we are redefining the policy of plowing for two to three inches of snow based upon the type of snow. Ruf indicated the current budget fits the current policy and questioned if budget becomes an issue, do we continue to plow? Last year the budget was exceeded by roughly \$5,000 in overtime and \$300 in salt. If we are not considering the type of snow when determining when to plow, it may become a budget issue down the road. Hicks would like to adhere to the policy of plowing when we reach two to three inches of snow, regardless of the type of snowfall and that whether or not we plow should not be based upon the budget. Ruf questioned if this would be based upon a single snowfall or accumulation. Light snow typically packs down on the highly traveled streets which would result in priority #1 and #2 streets being good, with priority #3 and #4 needing attention in these situations.

It was made clear by all members of the committee that the need for improvement is not a personnel issue as the individuals clearing the streets are doing a great job. It is a matter of improving when we are plowing.

Discussion ensued with what could be done to encourage public communication regarding snowplowing including updating the website with the snow reports, twitter feeds, and text messages. As we implement the new website, these are ideas that should be considered.

No action taken.

2. Adjournment

Motion by Mason/Lardahl to adjourn at 11:32 am. **All present voting aye, motion carried.**

**Minutes submitted by,
Bill Hicks, Chair**